

JUDAH HALEVI (before 1075–after 1141) was born in Muslim Tudela, on the borders of Christian Spain. At an early age he travelled to the centres of Jewish scholarship in Andalusia. In Granada, he formed a lasting friendship with Moses ibn Ezra which is recorded in a moving exchange of poems. Later, Halevi settled in Toledo, the capital of Castile under Alfonso VI, where he practised medicine, apparently in the service of the king. However, the murder in 1108 of his benefactor, Solomon ibn Ferrizuel, at the hands of Christian mercenaries, and the attacks upon the Jews in Toledo in the following year, prompted him to return to the Muslim area, where he made his home in Cordoba. His personal experiences in Christian and Muslim Spain during the Reconquest ('Between the armies of Seir and Kedar my army is lost . . . when they fight their wars, we fall in their downfall'), and his philosophical views concerning the meaning of diaspora and the path to redemption, culminated in his decision to emigrate to the Holy Land. Shortly before his departure he completed his influential treatise *The Book of Argument and Proof in Defence of the*



## TABLE OF POEMS

*Despised Faith.* Translated from Arabic into Hebrew in the twelfth century, it came to be known as *The Book of the Kuzari* because it is composed as a dialogue between a Jewish scholar (the *haver*) and the king of the Khazars, who had converted to Judaism in the eighth century. In September 1140, after an arduous voyage, Halevi arrived in Alexandria and was received with great acclaim. He died six months later, after a period of intensive creativity. His poetic corpus of secular and sacred works consists of over a thousand compositions which attest to an unrivalled mastery of language and musical patterns and a profound lyrical expression of religious and national themes. His 'songs of Zion' are, perhaps, his most famous works. No Hebrew poet since the Psalmists had sung the praises of the Holy Land with such passion. The longing for Zion, the pain of parting from his cultural environment, the perilous sea voyage – all these topics were uncommon in the poetry of the time.

'Even since You were' מֵאִזְּמַעוֹן הָאֶהְרָה 333

This is the most extreme expression in Halevi's poetry of his view that the suffering of Israel is a sanctification of the name of God. In the *Kuzari* the *haver* maintains that Israel could have hastened the deliverance by submitting willingly to the yoke of exile.

'My love, have you forgotten' יְדִידִי, הֲשָׁכַחְתָּ חֲנוּתִי 334

'O sleeper, whose heart' יָשֵׁן – וְלִבּוֹ עֵר 334

The opening line of this *reshut* refers to Song of Songs 5.2 which was allegorically interpreted to mean that Israel 'slept' in the darkness of exile but its heart yearned to rejoin the Shekinah. The 'star' (line 3; Numbers 24.17) represents the Messiah. Various messianic movements were active in Halevi's time and he once dreamt that the redemption would come in 1130.

'The lovely doe' יַעֲלֵת חֵן, מִמְּעוֹנָה 335

An *ahava* which, like the previous poem, employs the phraseology of the Song of Songs. The 'lover' and 'gazelle' represent God.

'O you that sleep' יְשֻׁנָּה בְּחֵיק יְלָדוֹת 335

A *reshut* for *Nishmat*.

'Lord, all my longing' אֵלֹהֵי, נִגְדֶּדְךָ כָּל תַּאֲוָתִי 336

A metrical *bakasha* ('supplication'), a type of personal *seliḥa* introduced by early Spanish *piyut*. Characteristically, its ending repeats its beginning.

'I am running towards' לְקִרְאָת מְקוֹר חַיִּי אָמֵת 337

Takes, as its point of departure, Psalms 36.10: 'With You is the fountain of life; by Your light do we see light.'



# TABLE OF POEMS

'Lord, where shall I find You?'	יה, אנה אמצאך	338
An <i>ofan</i> in the rhyme-form of a <i>muwashshah</i> , but written in the special syllabic metre which was exclusively used in Spain in strophic <i>piyutim</i> . In this case, there are twelve syllables to a line, divided into units of six and six by internal rhymes. It is based on Solomon's prayer (2 Chronicles 6.18), on a verse from the daily <i>Kedusha</i> ('Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His place'), and on the Midrashic paradox: 'The Lord is the place of His world, but the world is not His place'; that is, the world is contained in Him, not He in the world.		
'Do these tears know'	הידעו הדמעות	339
An epitaph for the tombstone of an unidentified 'Rabbi Abraham'.		
'Alas, my daughter'	הה, בתי, השכחת	339
'On that day'	יום אכפי הכבדתי	340
This lament, in the <i>muwashshah</i> form, for the Ninth of Av elaborates on a Talmudic legend concerning the murder of the prophet Zechariah, who was stoned in the Temple-court by order of King Joash (2 Chronicles 24.21-22).		
'O graceful doe'	יצלת חן, רחמי ללב	342
Vulgar Arabic – and sometimes Romance – was generally employed in the final couplet ( <i>kharja</i> ) of the secular Hebrew <i>muwashshah</i> . The <i>kharja</i> was, in most cases, borrowed from popular Arabic or Romance songs.		
'My love washes'	עפרה חבבס	343
The Arabic superscription in the <i>diwan</i> reads: 'An improvisation composed upon passing by a river where washerwomen were laundering.'		
'Why, O fair one'	מה לך, צביה	343
Excerpts.		
'O my fair youth'	בי הצבי	344
Another <i>muwashshah</i> , in a characteristic popular vein.		
'Gently, my hard-hearted'	אט לי, חזק ללב	346
Opening section of the reply to a song of friendship (by Solomon ibn al-Muallim) which had greeted Halevi's move to Granada.		
'Why put your trust'	מה תאמין בזמן	346
'Th slaves of Time'	צבדי זמן	347
'My heart is in the East'	לבי במזרח	347



## TABLE OF POEMS

Zion was 'in the domain of Edom' (line 4) after the conquest of Jerusalem by the Crusaders in 1099.

*'O Zion, will you not ask'* צִיּוֹן, הֲלֹא תִשְׁאַלִי 347

Excerpts from the most famous of Halevi's Zion poems. Though not intended for the liturgy, it was soon included in the laments for the Ninth of Av and gave rise to scores of imitations ('Zionides'), many of which entered the Ashkenazi rite. The sixteenth-century legend, that Halevi was trampled to death by an Arab horseman as he was reciting this poem at the gates of Jerusalem, is widely known from Heine's portrayal in *Hebrew Melodies* (1851). The gates of Zion 'face the gates of heaven' (line 12) because, according to rabbinic belief, there was a celestial Temple corresponding to, and exactly opposite, the earthly one.

*'Let not your heart tremble'* וְאַל יִמּוֹט בְּלִבְ יָמִים 349

From a poem in which he exhorts himself to set forth on the voyage to Zion. The description of the storm at sea partly echoes Psalm 107.23-32.

*'This wind of yours'* זֶה רוּחְךָ, צֵד מְעַרְב 350

The western wind brings him closer to his destination. This, and the following poems, were written during the long sea journey.

*'Greetings to the kinsfolk'* קְרֹאוּ עָלַי בְּנוֹת 351

*'Has a flood come'* הֲבֵא מַבּוּל 352



יהודה הלוי

*Judah Halevi*

מֵאֵז מֵעוֹן הָאֱהָבָה

THE HOME OF LOVE

מֵאֵז מֵעוֹן הָאֱהָבָה הִיִּיתָ —  
חֲנוּ אֶהְבִּי בְּאֶשֶׁר חֲנִיתָ.  
תּוֹכְחוֹת מְרִיבֵי עָרְבוּ לִי עַל שְׂמֶךְ;  
עֲזָבָם — יַעֲנֶנּוּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר עָנִיתָ.  
לְמַדּוֹ חֲרוֹגָךְ אוֹיְבֵי — וְאֶהְבָּם,  
כִּי יִדְפוּ חֵלֶל אֲשֶׁר הִפִּיתָ.

Ever since You were the home of love  
for me, my love has lived where You  
have lived. Because of You, I have  
delighted in the wrath of my enemies;  
let them be, let them torment the one  
whom You tormented. It was from You  
that they learned their wrath, and I  
love them, for they hound the wounded  
one whom You struck down. Ever



מיום בזיתיני בזיתיני אני,  
כי לא אכבד את אשר בזית.  
עד יעבר-ועם, ותשלח עוד פדות  
אל גחלתך זאת אשר פדית.

since You despised me, I have despised  
myself, for I will not honour what You  
despise. So be it, until Your anger has  
passed, and again You will redeem  
Your own possession, which You once  
redeemed.<sup>1</sup>

### ידידי, השבחת

### ZION COMPLAINS TO GOD

ידידי, השבחת חנותך בבין שדי –  
ולמה מכרתני צמיתות למעבדי?  
הלא אז בארץ לא זרועה רדפתיה?  
ושעיר וחר פארן וסיני וסין עדי!  
והיו לך דודי, והיה רצונך בי –  
ואיך תחלק עתה כבודי לבלעדי?  
רחוקה אלי שעיר, הדופה עדי קדר,  
בחונה בכור יון, מענה בעל מדי:  
היש בלחך גואל, ובלתי – אסיר-תקנה?  
תנה עזך לי, כי לך אתנה דודי!

My love, have you forgotten how you  
lay between my breasts? Then why  
have you sold me forever to my  
enslavers? Did I not follow you<sup>2</sup>  
through a barren land? Let Mount  
Seir and Mount Paran, Sinai and Sin  
be my witnesses! There my love was  
yours, and I was your delight. Then  
how can you now bestow my glory  
upon others? I am thrust into Seir,<sup>3</sup>  
driven towards Kedar,<sup>4</sup> tested in the  
furnace of Greece, crushed under the  
yoke of Media. Is there any saviour but  
you? any prisoner of hope but I? Give  
me your strength, for I shall give you  
my love!

### ישן – ולבו ער

### TO ISRAEL, IN EXILE

ישן – ולבו ער, בוער ומשתער –  
צא גא והנער ולכה באור פני.  
קומה, צלח ורכב! דרך לך פוכב,  
ואשר בבור שוב עליה לראש סיני.  
אל תעלו גפשים, האומרים 'תאשם

O sleeper, whose heart is awake,  
burning and raging, now wake and go  
forth, and walk in the light of My  
presence. Rise, and ride on! A star has  
come forth for you, and he who has  
lain in the pit will go up to the top of  
Sinai. Let them not exult, those who

1. From the bondage of Egypt.

2. After the exodus from Egypt.

3. The Christian nations.

4. The Muslim nations.



ציון! והנה שם לבי ושם עיני.  
אגל ואסתר, אקצף ואצטר –  
מי יחמל יותר מני עלי בני?

say, 'Zion is desolate!' – for My heart  
is in Zion and My eyes are there. I  
reveal Myself and I conceal Myself,  
now I rage, now I consent – but who  
has more compassion than I have for  
My children?

## יעלת חן

## TO THE RIVALS

יעלת חן, ממעונה רחקה,  
אוהבה פועם – ולמה צחקקה?  
צחקקה על בת אדום ובנות ערב  
המבקשות לחשק דוד חשקה.  
הן פראים הם – ואיך ידמו אלי  
יעלה על הצבי התרפקה?  
אי גבואה, אי מנורה, אי ארון  
הברית, אי השכינה דבקה?  
אל, משנאי, אל תכבו אהבה,  
כי תכבוה – והיא אש נשקה!

The lovely doe, far from her home,  
whose lover is angry – why did she  
laugh? She laughed at the daughter of  
Edom and the daughter of Arabia who  
covet her beloved. Why, they are  
nothing but wild asses, and how can  
they compare to the doe who nestled  
against her gazelle? Where is the spirit  
of prophecy found, where the lamp-  
stand, the Ark of the Covenant, the  
ever-present Shekinah? No, my rivals,  
do not try to quench love, for if you do,  
it will blaze up like fire!

## ישנה בחיק ילדות

## TO THE SOUL

ישנה בחיק ילדות, למתי תשקבי?  
דעי כי געורים בנערת ננערו.  
הלעד ימי השחרות? קומי צאי,  
ראי מלאכי שיבה במוסר שחרו.  
והתנערי מן הזמן, בצפירים  
אשר מרסיסי לילה יתנערו.  
דאי בדרור למצא דרור ממעלך  
ומתולדות ימים בימים יסערו.  
היי אחרי מלכך מרדפת, בסוד  
נשמות אשר אל טוב יי נהרו.

Oh, you that sleep in the bosom of  
childhood, how long will you rest there?  
Know that youth is shaken off like  
straw! Do you think boyhood lasts for  
ever? Get up, go out and see the grey  
heralds, who have come to rebuke you.  
Shake off Time as birds shake off the  
dew-drops of the night. Soar like a  
swallow to find freedom from your sins  
and from the vagaries of Fortune, that  
rage like a sea. Pursue your King, at  
one with the souls who flock towards  
the bounty of God.



## אֵלֹהֵי, נִגְדֶּךָ כָּל תַּאֲוָתִי

FOR THE DAY OF  
ATONEMENT

אֵלֹהֵי, נִגְדֶּךָ כָּל תַּאֲוָתִי,  
וְאִם לֹא אֶעֱלֶה עַל שִׁפְתִּי.  
רְצוֹנְךָ אֲשַׁלֶּה רָנַע – וְאֶגּוּעַ,  
וְיָמִי יִתֵּן וְתִבּוֹא שְׂאֵלָתִי,  
וְאֶפְקִיד אֶת שְׁאֵר רוּחִי בְּיָדְךָ,  
וְיִשְׁנֹתִי, וְעַרְכָּה לִי שְׁנֹתִי!  
בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ מִמָּוֶת – מוֹתִי בְּחַיִּי,  
וְאִם אֶדְבֵּק בְּךָ – חַיִּי בְּמוֹתִי.  
אֲכַל לֹא אֶדְעָה בְּמָה אֶקְדָּם,  
וְיִמָּה תִּהְיֶה עֲבוֹדָתִי וְדָתִי.

Lord, all my longing is before You,  
even though it does not pass my lips.  
Grant me Your favour for even a  
moment, and I will die. If only You  
would grant my wish! I will commit  
my spirit into Your keeping, I will  
sleep, and my sleep will be pleasant.  
When I am far from You my life is  
death; but if I cling to You, my death  
is life. But I do not know what to offer  
You, what my service and my worship  
should be.

דַּרְכֶּיךָ, אֵלֹהֵי, לִמְדֵנִי,  
וְשׁוּב מִמַּאֲסֵר סְכָלוֹת שְׁבוּתִי.  
וְהוֹרֵנִי בְּעוֹד יֵשׁ בִּי יִכְלֹת  
לְהִתְעַנּוֹת, וְאֵל תִּבְּזֶה עֲנוּתִי,  
בְּטָרֶם יוֹם אֶהְיֶה עָלֶי לְמִשְׁאָה,  
וְיוֹם יִכְבֹּד קִצְתִּי עַל קִצְתִּי,  
וְאֶבְנֶה בְּעַל-בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ, וְיֵאכֹל  
עֲצָמֵי עֶשׂ וְנִלְאוּ מִשְׁאֵתִי,  
וְאֶסַּע אֶל מְקוֹם גָּסְעוֹ אֲבוֹתִי  
וּבְמִקְוֵם תַּחֲנוּתָם תַּחֲנוּתִי.  
כִּגְר תּוֹשֵׁב אֲנִי עַל גֹּב אֲדָמָה,  
וְאוֹלָם בִּי בְּבִטְנָה גִחְלֹתִי.

Show me Your ways, O Lord, restore  
me from the bondage of folly. Teach  
me while I still have the strength to  
endure – do not scorn my plight! –  
before I become a burden to myself and  
my limbs weigh heavy on each other;  
before I yield unwillingly, and my  
bones wither and are unable to bear  
me; before I journey to where my  
fathers have gone, and come to rest  
where they are resting. I am like a  
stranger upon the earth, but my true  
home is in her womb.

נְעוּרֵי עַד הָלַם עָשׂוּ לְנַפְשָׁם,  
וְיָמֵי גַם אֲנִי אֶעֱשֶׂה לְבֵיתִי?  
וְהָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר גָּתַן בְּלִבִּי  
מִנְעֵנִי לְבַקֵּשׁ אַחֲרֵיתִי.

My youth has thus far had its pleasure,  
but when shall I, too, provide for my  
household? The world and its delights,  
which He put in my heart, have kept



ואיכה אעבד יוצרי — בעודי  
 אסיר יצרי ועבד תאוותי?  
 ואיכה מעלה רמה אבקש —  
 ומחר תהיה רמה אחותי?  
 ואיך ייטב ביום טובה לבבי,  
 ולא אדע — הייטב מחרתתי?  
 והימים והלילות ערבים  
 לבלות את שארי צד בלותי,  
 ולרוח יזרון מחציתי,  
 ולעפר ישיבון מחציתי.

ומה אמר — ויצרי ירדפני  
 באויב מנעורי עד בלותי?  
 ומה לי בזמן — אם לא רצונך?  
 ואם אינך מנתי — מה מנתי?  
 אני ממעשים שולל ועלם,  
 וצדקתך לבדה היא כסותי.  
 ועוד מה אאריך לשון ואשאל?  
 אלגי, נגדך כל תאוותי!

### לקראת מקור חיי אמת

לקראת מקור חיי אמת ארוצה —  
 על פן בחיי שוא וריק אקווצה.  
 לראות פני מלכי מגמתי לבד,  
 לא אערץ בלתו ולא אעריצה.  
 מי יתגני לחזותו בחלום!  
 אישן שנת עולם ולא אקיצה.  
 לו אחקזה פניו בלבי ביתה,  
 לא שאלו עיני להביט חוצה.

me from seeking my aim. And how can  
 I worship my Maker while I am still  
 captive to my lust, slave to my desire?  
 How can I aspire to a high rank, when  
 tomorrow the worm will be my sister?  
 How can I be cheerful on a happy day,  
 when I do not know if there will be  
 happiness tomorrow? The days and  
 nights have pledged to consume my  
 flesh, to scatter half of me to the winds  
 and return the other half to the dust.

What more can I say? My passions  
 hound me like an enemy from youth to  
 withered old age. Does Time hold  
 anything for me except Your favour?  
 And if You are not my lot, what other  
 lot do I have? I am stripped naked,  
 devoid of good works, and only Your  
 righteousness is my covering. Then  
 why do I go on wagging my tongue and  
 pleading? O Lord, all my longing is  
 before You!

### THE TRUE VISION

I am running towards the fountain of  
 true life; therefore, I spurn the life of  
 lies and trifles. To look at the face of  
 my King — that is my only wish. None  
 but Him do I fear and venerate. If only  
 I could see Him in a dream! Oh, I  
 would sleep forever and never wake up.  
 If I could see His face inside my heart,  
 my eyes would no more wish to look  
 outside.



יְהוָה, אַתָּה אֲמַצְאָךְ ?

LORD, WHERE SHALL I  
FIND YOU?

יְהוָה, אַתָּה אֲמַצְאָךְ ? מְקוֹמְךָ נִעְלָה וְנִעְלָם!  
וְאַתָּה לֹא אֲמַצְאָךְ ? כְּבוֹדְךָ מְלֵא עוֹלָם!

Lord, where shall I find You? Your place is lofty and secret. And where shall I not find you? The whole earth is full of Your glory!

הִנֵּמְצָא בְּקִרְבִּים, אֶפְסִי אֶרֶץ הַקִּים.  
הִמְשָׁגְבִי לְקִרְוִים, הִמְבִּטְחִי לְרַחוּקִים.  
אַתָּה יוֹשֵׁב כְּרוּבִים, אַתָּה שׁוֹכֵן שְׁחָקִים.  
תִּתְהַלֵּל בְּצַבָּאָךְ — וְאַתָּה עַל רֹאשׁ מַהֲלָלִים.  
גִּלְגַּל לֹא יִשְׁאַךְ — אֵךְ כִּי חֲדָרֵי אוֹלָם!

You are found in man's innermost heart, yet You fixed earth's boundaries. You are a strong tower for those who are near, and the trust of those who are far. You are enthroned on the cherubim,<sup>1</sup> yet You dwell in the heights of heaven. You are praised by Your hosts, but even their praise is not worthy of You. The sphere of heaven cannot contain You; how much less the chambers of the Temple!

וּבְהִנָּשְׂאָךְ עֲלִיָּהֶם עַל כֵּס נִשְׂא נִרְם,  
אַתָּה קָרוֹב אֲלֵיהֶם מְרוֹחֶם וּמִבְשָׁרָם.  
פִּיהֶם יַעֲיִד בָּהֶם, כִּי אֵין בָּלְתָךְ יוֹצֵרָם.  
מִי זֶה לֹא יִירָאָךְ — וְעַל מַלְכוּתְךָ עֲלֵם?  
אוֹ מִי לֹא יִקְרָאָךְ — וְאַתָּה נוֹתֵן אֲכָלָם?

Even when You rise above Your hosts on a throne, high and exalted, You are nearer to them than their own bodies and souls. Their mouths attest that they have no Maker except You. Who shall not fear You? All bear the yoke of Your kingdom. And who shall not call to You? It is You who give them their food.

דָּרַשְׁתִּי קִרְבְּתְךָ, בְּכָל לִבִּי קִרְאִיתִיךָ,  
וּבְצִאֲתִי לְקִרְאָתְךָ — לְקִרְאֲתִי מִצִּיאֲתִיךָ,  
וּבְפִלְאִי גְבוּרָתְךָ בְּקִדְשׁ חַיִּיתִיךָ.  
מִי יֹאמַר לֹא רָאָךְ ? הֵן שָׁמַיִם וְחַיִּלָם  
יִגִּידוּ מוֹרָאָךְ בְּלִי נִשְׁמָע קוֹלָם!

I have sought to come near You, I have called to You with all my heart; and when I went out towards You, I found You coming towards me. I look upon Your wondrous power with awe. Who can say that he has not seen You? The heavens and their legions proclaim Your dread — without a sound.

1. Above the Ark.



האִמָּנוּת כִּי יֵשֶׁב אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָדָם?  
וַיֵּמָּה יִחְשַׁב כָּל חֹשֶׁב, אֲשֶׁר בָּעֶפֶר יִסּוּדָם —  
וְאַתָּה, קְדוֹשׁ, יוֹשֵׁב תְּהִלּוֹתָם וּכְבוֹדָם!  
חַיּוֹת יוֹדוּ פִּלְאָךְ, הַעֲוֹמְדוֹת בְּרוֹם עוֹלָם.  
עַל רְאִשֵׁיהֶם בִּסְאָךְ — וְאַתָּה נוֹשֵׂא כָלֶם

But can God really dwell among men?  
Their foundations are dust — what can  
they conceive of Him? Yet You, O  
Holy One, make Your home where  
they sing Your praises and Your glory.  
The living creatures, standing on the  
summit of the world, praise Your  
wonders. Your throne is above their  
heads, yet it is You who carry them all!

## הַיָּדְעוּ הַדִּמְעוֹת

## TOMBSTONE INSCRIPTION

הַיָּדְעוּ הַדִּמְעוֹת מִי שָׁפְכָם,  
וַיָּדְעוּ הַלִּבּוֹת מִי הִפְכָם?  
הִפְכָם בּוֹא מְאוֹרָם תּוֹךְ רִגְבִּים,  
וְלֹא יָדְעוּ רִגְבִּים מֶה בְּתוֹכָם.  
בְּתוֹכָם שֶׁר וְגִדּוֹל, תָּם וְיָשָׁר,  
יֵרָא הָאֵל וְאִישׁ גָּבוֹחַ וְחָכָם.

Do these tears know who made them  
fall? Do these hearts know who made  
them recoil? Oh, they recoiled because  
their sun sank into the dust, and the  
dust does not know what it holds. It  
holds a princely man, blameless and  
upright, a God-fearing man, discreet  
and wise.

## הֵהָ, בְּתִי

## A MOTHER'S LAMENT

'הֵהָ, בְּתִי, הִשְׁכַּחְתְּ מִשְׁבְּגָךְ?  
כִּי לִשְׂאוֹל גָּסְעוּ נוֹשְׂאֵי אֲרוֹנְךָ,  
וְאֵין חִלְקִי מִמֶּךָ רַק זְכָרוֹךְ.  
וְאַחֲוִינִי אֶת עֲפָרוֹת צִיּוֹנְךָ  
עֵת אֲסוּר לִשְׂאֵל שְׁלוֹמְךָ — וְאֵינִי:  
כִּי הַמָּוֶת יִפְרִיד בֵּינִי וּבֵינִיךָ.

'Alas, my daughter, have you forgotten  
your home? The coffin bearers have  
taken you to the grave, and I have  
nothing left of you but your memory.  
When I come to greet you, and do not  
find you, I take pity on the dust of your  
tomb; for death has parted us.

בֵּית מוֹצֵאת מִחֶדֶר הוֹרָתָה —  
אֵיךְ אֶחָיָה וּמִנְפָּשִׁי גִזְרָתָה?  
צוּר אֲבִקַּע עֵת אֶרְאֶה צוּרָתָה.  
אֵיךְ תִּשְׁגָּה לְבָנָה מִהַדְרָתָה!

'O the daughter is taken from her  
mother's room! How can I live? Her  
limbs were part of me. My tears cleave  
rocks when I remember her. How the  
lustre of the moon has been tarnished!



שם בשאול אראה את חתומה,  
 איך תשים גוש עפר חפמה,  
 איך מתקו לה רגבי קבורמה.  
 מר לי מר, בתי, על חסרונך:  
 כי המות יפריד ביני וביגך. [...]

There, in the grave, I see her being  
 wed: clods of earth are her canopy, and  
 the dust of the pit is sweet to her. O my  
 daughter, your loss is bitter to me; for  
 death has parted us.

הה, בתי, הכרע הכרעתני!  
 'אוי, אמי, אוי לי כי ילדתני.  
 אך היום איך מאוס מאסתני?  
 כי לבכור מות גדלתני.  
 בהגיע תור, לנפשי שלחתני,  
 ובצטרת עפר עשרתני,  
 ובחפת אברון הושבתני.  
 בצל-ברחה, אמי, לא ברצונך:  
 כי המות יפריד ביני וביגך. [...]

'Alas, my daughter, what sorrow you  
 have brought me!' 'Alas, alas, my  
 mother, that you ever gave me birth.  
 How, on this day, how could you cast  
 me off? Oh, you brought me up to be  
 Death's bride! When my turn came,  
 you sent me away alone; you crowned  
 me with a garland of dust; you set me  
 down in the bridal-bower of destruc-  
 tion. O my mother, it was against your  
 will, it was not of your doing, for death  
 has parted us.'

### יום אכפי הכבדתי

יום אכפי הכבדתי ויכפלו עוונתי,  
 בשלחי יד בדם גביא בחצר מקדש אלגני.  
 ולא כסתהו אדמה עד בוא חרב מוני,  
 ולא שקט עדי העם ועד הפליא פליליה —  
 ניירב בבת יהודה מאניה ואניה.

### THE MURDER OF ZECHARIAH

On that day I made my burden heavier  
 and multiplied my crimes when I shed  
 the prophet's blood in the court of the  
 Lord's temple. The earth would not  
 cover it until my enemies<sup>1</sup> came with  
 the sword; it would not rest until it was  
 avenged, wreaking terrible judgements.  
 Oh, He brought sorrow upon sorrow to  
 the daughter of Judah.

היה הולך וסוער עד בוא רב טבחים,  
 ובא אל מקדש אלגני וראה דמים רווחים.  
 וישאל בעבור זאת לפהגים הוובחים,

The blood grew more and more  
 tempestuous until Nebuzaradan, the  
 commander of the guard, arrived. When  
 he entered the Lord's temple, he  
 discovered the seething blood. He  
 asked the priests who were offering

1. The Babylonian armies, under the command of Nebuzaradan (2 Kings 25.8).



ויענוהו: 'אין זה כי אם דם הזבחים.'

גם הוא זבח לחקר מה זה ועל מה היה  
ואמר לגפשי: זאת חשאתך וזה פריה!

sacrifices, what it signified; and they replied: 'It is nothing but the blood of the sacrifices.' Then he, too, slaughtered a beast to see if this was so and how it came about; and I said to myself: 'This is your sin, and this is its fruit.'

ובכל זאת לא שקט ועודו בים נגרש.

ויבקש הדבר וימצא מפרש,

כי דם איש האלהים על לא חמס שרש.

ויאמר נבוזראדן: 'וגם דמו הנה נדרש!

אספו לי הלהנים והוציאו מביית יי,

ולא אשקט עד ישקט דם הנביא זכריה!

Still, the blood would not rest; it surged like the sea. Then, after questioning, the truth came to light: this was the blood of the man of God, cut down though he had done no wrong. Nebuzaradan said: 'The time has come to pay for his blood. Gather all the priests, take them out of the house of God. I shall not rest until the blood of the prophet Zechariah finds rest.'

דקר ישישים למאות ובחורים לרבואות,

ויורד לשבח פהגי אלגי צבאות,

וחינוקות של בית רב, ועיגי אבות רואות.

ואין שקט לדם נביא, ויהי למופת ולאות!

וחרב צר נוקמת והקרזה הומיה —

בכל זאת לא שב אפו ועוד ידו נטויה.

He murdered old men by the hundreds, and young men by the tens of thousands. He slaughtered the priests of the Lord of hosts, and school-children before the very eyes of their fathers. Still the blood of the prophet would not rest. This was a sign and a portent. The enemy's sword wreaked vengeance, the city was filled with uproar — yet His anger was not turned back and His hand was stretched out still!

הוסיף להרג נשים עם יונקי שדים,

ודם עולה ביניהם בים ויאור מצרים,

עדי נשא נבוזראדן עיניו לשמים

ויאמר: 'האין די לדם בבנות ירושלים?

הכלה אתה עושה את שארית השביה

ואז שקט דם גקי, וחרב גקם רגיה.

Then he killed women as well as babes at the breast, and the blood rose among them like a sea, like the river of Egypt, until Nebuzaradan raised his eyes to heaven and said: 'Will this blood not be content with the blood of Jerusalem's daughters? Are You going to wipe out the remnant of Israel?' Only then did the innocent blood come to rest; the sword of vengeance had drunk its fill.



## יעלת־חן, רחמי לֵבָב

## THE SENSITIVE DOE

יעלת חן, רחמי לֵבָב שְׂכַנְתִּיו מְעוֹדָה.  
תִּדְעִי כִּי יוֹם תִּנּוּדִי – אֲסוּגִי בְּגוֹדָה.  
גַּם בָּעֵת יִהְרָסוּ עֵינַי לְהַבִּיט אֶל הוֹדָה,  
מִלְחֲמֵיךְ פָּגְעוּ בִּי וְחָשִׁים יִפְרִישׁוּ,  
כִּי תִמְתָּם בָּאֵשׁ יַחְתּוּ, וְאוֹתִי יִגְלִשׁוּ.

O graceful doe, pity this heart in which  
you have dwelled all your life. Know  
that the day you leave me, your going  
will be my ruin. And even now, when  
my eyes dare to glance at your splen-  
dour, I am stung by the serpents that  
guard your cheeks, for their poison  
burns like fire and they drive me out.

שָׁלְלָה לִבִּי בְּרָדִים עָלַי לֵב מְנַחִים:  
לֵב כִּמּוֹ אֶבֶן וְרַק יִגְמַל שְׁגִי תַפּוּחִים!  
נָצְבוּ וַיִּהְיוּ לְשֹׁמְאֵל וַיִּמְיֵן בְּרִמְחִים.  
מוֹקְדֵיהֶם הֵם בְּלִבִּי – וְהֵם לֹא נִגְשׁוּ,  
גַּם בְּפִיהֶם דָּמִי שָׁתוּ – וְלֹא הִתְבּוֹשְׁשׁוּ!

She ensnared my heart with the breasts  
that lie upon her heart – a heart of  
stone, and yet it put forth two apples!  
They stand guard, to the left and to the  
right, like lances. Their fiery [nipples  
burn] in my heart, though they have  
never come near me. Their mouths  
have drunk my blood, they felt no  
shame at all!

יעֲלֶה חֲקִי דַת הָאֵל בְּעֵינֶיהָ תִּפְרֶה,  
כִּי תִמְיַחֲנִי בְּצַדִּיקָה אֶבֶל אֵין לִי כִפָּר.  
הִרְאִיתָם עוֹד לֵב אֲרִיָּה וְעַפְצָפִי עֶפֶר?  
לִמְדוֹ לִטְרֶף בְּלִבִּיא, וְחָצִים יִלְטִשׁוּ,  
דָּם לִבִּי יִמְצוּ יִשְׁתּוּ, וְנִפְשִׁי בִקְשׁוּ.

This doe violates the laws of God with  
her eyes: she kills me with malice  
aforethought, yet no one avenges me.  
Have you ever seen the heart of a lion  
joined to the eyelids of a gazelle? Her  
eyelids have learned to tear like a lion,  
they hurl sharpened arrows at me, they  
drain my heart's blood to the dregs.  
They are out for my life.

יוֹם אָנִי מֵיִין דּוֹדִיָּה בְּשִׁכּוֹר מְתָרוֹגֵן,  
כִּי שְׁלוֹמִיָּה תִפְגִּיעַ וְעָלִי תִתְלַוֵּן  
עַל יְדֵי צִירִים; וּבְבוֹאָם, אֲלִיהֶם תִּתְתַּנֵּן:  
'מִלֵּאכֵי שְׁלוֹם, פָּגְעוּ בִּי, שָׁנוּ גַם שִׁלְשׁוּ!  
מֵאֲמָרָם לִבִּי פָתוּ וְרוּחִי תִחַדְשׁוּ.

One day, when I was reeling like a  
drunkard, longing for the wine of her  
love, she dispatched envoys to me  
bearing greetings and complaints; and  
when they returned to her, she begged  
them: 'O messengers of peace, come  
again and yet again!' These tidings  
seduced my heart and revived my spirit.



יום בגנה רעו ידי תדיה עשו,

אמרה: 'הרף ידיך – הדי עוד לא נסו!'

ואמרים לי החליקה לבדי המסו:

'גן מתא נקש, יא חביבי, פאנכר דנאשו

אלגלאלה רכיצה בשחאת הפרמשו.'

But one day when my hands were  
grazing in her garden and fondling her  
breasts, she said: 'Now take away your  
hands – they are not skilful enough.'<sup>1</sup>

And her words were so seductive that  
they melted my heart: 'Do not touch  
me, friend, I do not like those who  
hurt me. My breasts are soft and  
sensitive. Enough! I shall refuse one  
and all!'<sup>2</sup>

### עפרה תכבס

### THE LAUNDRESS

עפרה תכבס את בגדיה במי

דמעי ותשטחם לשמש וזהרה:

לא שאלה מי העינות – עם שתי

עיני, ולא שמש – ליפי תארה.

My love washes her clothes in the water  
of my tears and spreads them out in the  
sun of her beauty. She has no need of  
spring-water – she has my two eyes;  
nor of the sun – she has her own  
radiance.

### מה לך, צביה

### SONG OF FAREWELL

מה לך, צביה, תמנעי ציריך

מדוד, צלציו מלאו ציריך?

לא תדעי כי אין לדודך מזמן

בלתי שמע קול שלומותיך?

אם הפרידה על שגיניו נגזרה –

עמדי מעט עד אהזה פניך.

לא אדעה אם בין צלעי געצר

לבי, ואם ילך למסעריך.

Why, O fair one, do you withhold your  
envoys from the lover whose heart is  
filled with pain of you? Do you not  
know that Time means nothing to your  
beloved, unless he hear your welcoming  
voice? If we two are doomed to parting,  
stay a while and let me look at your  
face. I do not know if my heart has  
come to a stop between my ribs, or  
else has wandered off with you. Oh,

1. Or, 'they [my breasts] have not yet experienced such things'.

2. The last two lines are in mixed Arabic and Romance. The meaning is uncertain.



חי אהבה, זכרי ימי חשקך כמו  
אזכר אני לילות תשוקותיך.  
באשר דמותך בחלומי יעבר,  
כן אעברה-נא בחלומותיך.  
ביני ובינך ים דמעות יהמו  
גליו, ולא אוכל עבר אליך.  
אך לו פצמיתך לעברו קרבו,  
אז נבקעו מימיו לבך רגליך.  
לו אחרי מותי באוני יעלה  
קול פצמון זהב עלי שוליתך!  
או תשאלי לשלום ידיך, משאול  
אשאל בדותיך ובשלומיך! [...]

for the life of love, remember the days  
of your desire, as I remember the  
nights of your passion. And just as your  
image moves through my dreams, let  
mine move through yours. A sea of  
tears roars between us, and I cannot  
cross its waves to reach you. But if your  
steps approached to cross them, the  
waters would divide before your feet.  
Oh, after my death, let me still hear the  
sound of the golden bells on the hem  
of your skirt. And if you then ask how  
your beloved is, I, from the grave, will  
send you my love and my blessings!

מי יתנני אחיה עד אארה  
בשם ומר מבין הליכותיך.  
לא אשמעה קולך, אבל אשמע עלי  
סתרי לבבי קול צעדותיך. [...]

If only I could live until I gather  
myrrh and spices from among your  
footprints! I cannot hear your voice,  
but in the covert of my heart I hear the  
sound of your steps.

## בי העב, בי אדוני

## THE CRUEL LOVER

בי העב, בי אדוני,  
יקר בעינך יגוני,  
פן יקרני אסוני.  
אט, אט, אט בדמי,  
בי רק בךך שלומי!

O my fair youth, my lord, take my grief  
to heart, lest disaster overtake me. Oh,  
gently, deal gently with my blood, for  
my fate is in your hands alone.



לְבִי לְבֵית־אֵל וּלְפָנֵי־אֵל מְאֹד יִהְיֶה  
 וּלְמַחְנֵימִים וְכָל פְּגָעֵי טְהוֹרִיךָ.  
 שֵׁם הַשְׁכִּינָה שְׁכָנָה לָךְ, וְהַיּוֹצֵר  
 פָּתַח לְמוֹל שַׁעְרֵי שַׁחַק שַׁעְרֶיךָ,  
 וְכָבוֹד אֱדֹנִי לְבַד הָיָה מְאֹרֶךְ, וְאֵין  
 שֶׁמֶשׁ וְסֶהָר וְכוֹכָבִים מְאִירֶיךָ.  
 אֶבְחַר לְגִפְשִׁי לְהַשְׁתַּפֵּךְ בְּמָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר  
 רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים שְׁפֹכָה עַל בְּחִירֶיךָ.  
 אַתָּה בֵּית מְלוּכָה וְאַתָּה כֶּסֶּא אֱדֹנִי, וְאִם  
 יָשָׁבוּ עַבְדִּים עָלַי כְּסֹאוֹת גְּבִירֶיךָ!

מִי יִתְּנֵנִי מְשׁוּטָט בְּמָקוֹמוֹת אֲשֶׁר  
 נִגְלוּ אֱלֹהִים לַחֲזוֹנֶיךָ וְצִירֶיךָ.  
 מִי יַעֲשֶׂה לִּי כְנָפִים וְאַרְחִיק נֹדָה,  
 אֲנִיד לְבַחֲרֵי לִבִּי בֵּין בְּתֻרֶיךָ.  
 אֶפְלָל לֹאֲפִי עָלֵי אֶרֶץ וְאַרְצָה אֶבֶר  
 גִּיד מְאֹד וְאַחֲוֹנָן אֶת עֶפְרַיִם.  
 אֶבְכֶּה בְּעַמְדִּי עָלֵי קְבֻרוֹת אֲבוֹתִי וְאֶשׁ-  
 תוֹמָם בְּחֶבְרוֹן עָלֵי מִבְחַר קְבֻרֶיךָ.  
 אֶעֱבֹר בְּיַעְרֶךָ וּבְרִמְלֶיךָ וְאֶעֱמַד בְּגִל-  
 עֲדָךְ וְאֶשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אֶל הַר עֲבָרֶיךָ –  
 הַר הָעֲבָרִים וְהַר הָהָר, אֲשֶׁר שֵׁם שְׁנֵי  
 אֲוִרִים גְּדוֹלִים, מְאִירֶיךָ וּמֹרֶיךָ.  
 חַיֵּי גִשְׁמוֹת – אֲוִיר אֶרֶץ, וּמִקַּר־דְּרוֹר  
 אֶבְקֶת עֶפְרָךְ, וְנִפְתַּת צוּף – נְהַרֶיךָ!  
 יִנָּעַם לְגִפְשִׁי הֵלֶךְ עָלֶם וְיִחַף עָלֵי  
 חֲרָבוֹת שְׁמָמָה אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ דְבִירֶיךָ,

My heart longs for Bethel and Penuel,  
 for Mahanaim<sup>1</sup> and for all the shrines  
 of your pure ones. There the Shekinah  
 dwelled within you, and your Maker  
 opened your gates to face the gates of  
 heaven. There the glory of the Lord  
 was your only light; it was not the sun,  
 moon, or stars that shone over you. Oh,  
 I would pour out my life in the very  
 place where once the spirit of God was  
 poured out upon your chosen ones.  
 You are the seat of royalty, you are the  
 throne of the Lord – though slaves now  
 sit upon your princes' thrones!

If only I could roam through those  
 places where God was revealed to your  
 prophets and heralds! Who will give  
 me wings, so that I may wander far  
 away? I would carry the pieces of my  
 broken heart over your rugged moun-  
 tains.<sup>2</sup> I would bow down, my face on  
 your ground; I would love your stones;  
 your dust would move me to pity. I  
 would weep, as I stood by my ancestors'  
 graves, I would grieve, in Hebron, over  
 the choicest of burial places!<sup>3</sup> I would  
 walk in your forests and meadows, stop  
 in Gilead, marvel at Mount Abarim;  
 Mount Abarim and Mount Hor, where  
 the two great luminaries [Moses and  
 Aaron] rest, those who guided you and  
 gave you light. The air of your land is  
 the very life of the soul, the grains of  
 your dust are flowing myrrh, your  
 rivers are honey from the comb. It  
 would delight my heart to walk naked  
 and barefoot among the desolate ruins  
 where your shrines once stood; where

1. All sites figuring in the life of Jacob.

2. The hills of Bether (Song of Songs 2.17), in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

3. The burial cave of the Patriarchs (Genesis 23.17).



במקום ארונך אשר נגנז, ובמקום כרוי-  
 ביד אשר שכנו חדרי חדריו.  
 אגז ואשליך פאר נזרי ואלב זמן,  
 חלל בארץ טמאה את גזיריך. [...]

אשרי מחכה ויגיע ויראה עלות  
 אורך ויבקעו עליו שחריך,  
 לראות בטובת בחיריך, ולעלז בשמ-  
 חתך בשובך אלי קדמת געורריך!

### ואל ימוט

[...] ואל ימוט בלב ימים לבבך  
 והרים תחזה מטים ומשים,  
 ומלחים ידיהם במלחים,  
 וחכמי התרשים מחרישים.  
 שמחים הולכים לבח פניהם –  
 ושבים אל אחוריהם ובושים.  
 ואקינוס לפניך למנוס –  
 ואין מברח לך כי אם יקושים!  
 וימוטו וינוטו קלעים,  
 וינועו ויועו קרשים,  
 ויד רוח מצחקת במים,  
 פנושאי העמרים בדישים,  
 ופעם תעשה מהם גרנות,  
 ופעם תעשה מהם גדישים.  
 בעת התגברם דמו אריות,  
 ועת החלשם דמו נחשים,

your Ark was hidden away,<sup>1</sup> where your  
 cherubim once dwelled in the inner-  
 most chamber. I shall cut off my  
 glorious hair and throw it away, I shall  
 curse Time that has defiled your pure  
 ones in the polluted lands [of exile].

Happy is he who waits and lives to see  
 your light rising, your dawn breaking  
 forth over him! He shall see your  
 chosen people prospering, he shall  
 rejoice in your joy when you regain the  
 days of your youth.

### THE POET IMAGINES HIS VOYAGE

Let not your heart tremble in the heart  
 of the sea, when you see mountains  
 trembling and heaving, and sailors'  
 hands as limp as rags, and soothsayers  
 struck dumb. When they set their  
 course, they were full of joy, but now  
 they are beaten back in shame. The  
 whole ocean is yours to escape in, but  
 your only refuge is the snare of the  
 deep. The sails quiver and quake, the  
 beams creak and shudder. The hand of  
 the wind toys with the waves, like  
 reapers at the threshing: now it flattens  
 them out, now it stacks them up. When  
 the waves gather strength, they are like  
 lions; when they weaken, they are like

1. According to Talmudic legend,  
 King Josiah hid the holy Ark from the enemy.



וְרֹאשׁוֹנִים דִּלְקוּם אַחֲרוֹנִים  
בְּצַפְעוֹנִים וְאֵין לָהֶם לַחֲשִׁים. [...]

snakes, who then pursue the lions –  
like vipers that cannot be charmed.

וְרָגַע יִשְׁתַּקּוּ גָלִים, וְיִדְמוּ  
עֲדָרִים עַל פְּנֵי אֶרֶץ גִּטּוּשִׁים.  
וְהַלִּיל – כְּבּוֹא שֶׁמֶשׁ בְּמַעְלוֹת  
צָבָא מְרוֹם, וְעָלִיו שֶׁר חֲמָשִׁים –  
כְּבוֹשִׁית מִשְׁבָּצוֹת זָהָב לְבוּשָׁה,  
וְכַתְּכֵלֶת בְּמַלּוּאֹת גְּבִישִׁים.  
וְכוֹכָבִים בְּלֵב הַיָּם גְּבוּכִים  
כְּגָרִים מִמַּעֲוִיגֵיהֶם גְּרוּשִׁים,  
וְכַדְמוּתָם בְּצִלְמָם יַעֲשׂוּ אוֹר  
בְּלֵב הַיָּם בְּלִהְיוֹת וְאֲשִׁים.  
פְּנֵי מַיִם וְשָׁמַיִם עֲדִיִּים  
עָלִי לֵיל מְטַהֲרִים לְטוּשִׁים.  
וְיָם דּוֹמָה לְרִקִּיעַ בְּעִינוֹ,  
שְׁנֵיהֶם אֶז שְׁנֵי יָמִים חֲבוּשִׁים –  
וּבִינוּתָם לְבָבִי יָם שְׁלִישִׁי,  
בְּשׂוֹא גָלִי שֶׁבַחִי הַחֲדָשִׁים!

Suddenly, the waves calm down, and  
are like flocks spread out over the fields.  
And the night – once the sun has gone  
down the stairway of the heavenly  
hosts, who are commanded by the  
moon<sup>1</sup> – is like a Negress dressed in  
gold embroidery, or like a violet robe  
spangled with crystal. The stars are  
astray in the heart of the sea, like  
strangers expelled from their homes.  
And in the heart of the sea they cast  
a light, in their image and likeness,  
that glows like fire. Now the sea and  
the sky are pure, glittering ornaments  
upon the night. The sea is the colour of  
the sky – they are two seas bound  
together. And between these two, my  
heart is a third sea, as the new waves of  
my praise surge on high!

### זֶה רוּחְךָ, צֵד מַעְרָב

### TO THE WESTERN WIND

זֶה רוּחְךָ, צֵד מַעְרָב, רִקּוּם:  
הַגֶּרֶךְ בְּכִנּוּסָיו וְהַמְּפּוּחַ.  
מֵאוֹצְרוֹת הָרוּכְלִים מוֹצֵאָךְ,  
כִּי אֵינְךָ מֵאוֹצְרוֹת הָרוּחַ!  
בְּנִפְי דְּרוֹר תִּגִּיף, וְתִקְרָא לִי דְּרוֹר,  
וּבְמַר-דְּרוֹר מִן הַצְּרוֹר לְקוּחַ.

This wind of yours, O West, is all  
perfume – it has the scent of spikenard  
and apple in its wings. Wind, you come  
from the storehouse of spice-merchants,  
and not from the common storehouse  
of winds. You lift up the swallow's  
wings, you set me free, you are like the  
purest perfume, fresh from a bunch of

1. Lit. 'commander over unit of fifty'.



מה נִכְסְפוּ לָךְ עַם, אֲשֶׁר בְּגִלְלָךְ  
 רָכְבוּ בְּגִבּ הַיָּם עָלֶי גִבּ לֹוֹחַ!  
 אַל גֵּא תִרְפֶּה יָדְךָ מִן הָאֵגִי,  
 כִּי יִחַגֶּה הַיּוֹם וְכִי יָפוּחַ.  
 וְרָקַע תִּהְיוּם וְקִרַע לִבֵּב יָמִים, וְגַע  
 אֶל הַרְרֵי קֹדֶשׁ וְשֵׁם תָּנוּחַ.  
 וְגָעַר בְּקָדִים הַמְסַעֵר יָם, עַדִּי  
 יֵשִׁים לִבֵּב הַיָּם בְּסִיר גְּפוּחַ.

myrrh. Everyone here longs for you; by your good graces, they ride over the sea upon a mere plank. Oh, do not abandon the ship, when the day draws to its end or when it begins. Smooth out the ocean, break a path through the sea until you reach the holy mountains, and there subside. Rebuke the east wind that whips up the sea and turns it into a boiling cauldron.

מַה יַּעֲשֶׂה אֲסוּר בְּיַד הַצּוּר, אֲשֶׁר  
 פָּעַם יְהִי עֲצוּר, וְעַתָּה שְׁלוּחַ?  
 אֵךְ סוֹד שְׁאַלְתִּי בְּיַד מָרוֹם — וְהוּא  
 יוֹצֵר מָרוֹם הָרִים וּבוֹרֵא רוּחַ!

But how can the wind help, for it is a prisoner of the Rock — sometimes held back and sometimes let loose? Only God can grant my deepest wish: for He is the maker of high mountains and the creator of winds!

## קִרְאוּ עָלַי בְּנוֹת

## SONG AT SEA

קִרְאוּ עָלַי בְּנוֹת וּמִשְׁפָּחוֹת  
 שְׁלוֹם, וְעַל אֲחִים וְעַל אָחוֹת,  
 מֵאֵת אֲסִיר תִּקְוָה אֲשֶׁר נִקְנָה  
 לַיָּם, וְשֵׁם רוּחוֹ בְּיַד רוּחוֹת.  
 רָחוּי בְּיַד מַעֲרֵב לֵיד מִזְרָח,  
 זֶה יַעֲבֹר לִנְחוֹת, וְזֶה — לְדָחוֹת.  
 בֵּינוּ וּבֵין מוֹת כְּפֶשַׁע, אֵךְ  
 בֵּינוּ וּבֵינוּ מַעֲבָה לִוְחוֹת.  
 קְבוּר בְּתִיּוֹ בְּאֶרֶץ עֵץ — לֹא  
 קִרְקַע, וְלֹא אֶרֶבַע, וְלֹא פָחוֹת!  
 יוֹשֵׁב — וְאֵין לַעֲמֹד עָלַי רִגְלָיו,  
 שׁוֹכֵב — וְאֵין רִגְלָיו מִשְׁלָחוֹת,  
 חוֹלָה וְיָרָא מִפְּנֵי גוֹיִים,

Greetings to the kinsfolk, to brothers and sisters, from this prisoner of hope who was ransomed by the sea and committed his spirit into the hands of the winds. Now they push him back and forth: the west wind guides his ship, while the east wind thrusts it back. Between him and death there is nothing but a step; between them only the thickness of the planks. He is buried alive in a wooden coffin, but without any earth: not even four cubits,<sup>1</sup> not even a handful. He sits, for there is no room for him to stand; he lies down, and he cannot stretch out his legs. He is ill, he is afraid of the

1. The minimum required for a grave.



גם מפני לסטים ומרוחות.  
 חובל ומלח, כל בְּנֵי פֶרֶחַח,  
 הם הסַגְגִּים שֶׁם וְהַפְּחוֹת.  
 לא לַחֲכָמִים שֶׁם וְגַם לֹא חֵן  
 לַיֹּדְעִים – רַק יֹדְעִים לְשָׁחוֹת!  
 יִתְעַצְבוּ רָגַע לְזֹאת פָּנִי –  
 אֵיךְ יַעֲלֶז הַלֵּב וְהַטּוֹחוֹת –  
 עַד אֲשַׁפֵּךְ נַפְשִׁי בְּחֵיק הָאֵל,  
 נִכַּח מְקוֹם אֲרוֹן וּמִזְבֵּחוֹת.  
 אֲגַמַּל לָאֵל, גּוֹמַל לַחֲסִידִים  
 טוֹבוֹת, בְּטוֹב שִׁירוֹת וְתַשְׁבָּחוֹת.

### הָבָא מִבּוֹל

הָבָא מִבּוֹל וְשֶׁם תִּבֵּל תִּרְכָּה ?  
 וְאֵין לִרְאוֹת פָּנֵי אֶרֶץ תִּרְכָּה,  
 וְאֵין אָדָם וְאֵין חַיָּה וְאֵין עוֹף –  
 הֶסֶף הַכֹּל וְשָׁקְבוּ מַעֲצָבָה ?  
 וּבִרְאוֹת הַר וְשׁוֹחָה לִי מְנוּחָה,  
 וְאֶרֶץ הָעֲרָבָה לִי עֲרָבָה.  
 וְאֲשַׁגִּיחַ לְכָל עֶבֶר – וְאֵין כָּל,  
 אֲבָל מַיִם וְשָׁמַיִם וְחִתָּה,  
 וְלוֹיִתָּן בְּהִרְתִּיחוֹ מִצּוֹלָה,  
 וְאֲחַשֵּׁב כִּי תְהוֹם יִחְשַׁב לְשִׁיבָה.  
 וְלֵב הַיָּם יִכְחַשׁ בְּאַגְיָה,  
 כְּאֵלּוּ הִיא בְּיַד הַיָּם גִּגְבָה !  
 וְהִם יִזְעַף – וְנַפְשִׁי תַעֲלֶז, כִּי  
 אֵלֵי מְקוֹדֶשׁ אֱלֹהֶיהָ קִרְבָּה.

Gentile passengers, as well as of pirates and ghosts. The helmsman and the sailors – all of them ruffraff – are the viceroys and governors here! Honour does not belong to the wise nor success to the skilful – only to those who know how to swim! Because of this my face is downcast – how could my heart rejoice? – but only for a moment: until I come to pour out my soul in the bosom of God, at the site of the Ark and the Altar. Then I shall render to God, who renders favours to the undeserving,<sup>1</sup> my choicest songs and praises.

### ON THE HIGH SEAS

Has a flood come and laid the world waste? For dry land is nowhere to be seen. There is neither man, nor beast, nor bird. Have they all perished, all lain down in torment and died? If only I could see a hill or valley, I would be comforted; even a desert would delight me. I look in every direction, and there is nothing but sea and sky and ship,<sup>2</sup> and leviathan churning the deep, until it seems that the abyss is white with age! Deceitfully, the sea covers the ship, as though it had taken it by theft. The sea is in turmoil, but my soul is full of joy, for she is drawing near to the temple of her God.

1. An allusion to the Benediction on Deliverance, recited by those who come safely through danger.

2. The word here is the one used for Noah's ark.